

Leadership Coaching Program Overview Dr. John Townsend

For many years, coaching programs for leaders and high-capacity individuals have been regarded as providing significant value to corporate executives, managers, small business owners, family-owned businesses and other influencers. For example, Vistage (vistage.com), the leading executive coaching program, has a global reputation for positive returns on investment for business leaders who are involved.

The Leadership Coaching Program (LCP) was created and is personally conducted by Dr. John Townsend (drtownsend.com), a psychologist, business consultant and leadership coach. Dr. Townsend has authored or co-authored over 20 books, selling 5 million copies, including the 2-million bestseller *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, When to Say No, To Take Control of Your Life*. His latest book on leadership is *Leadership Beyond Reason: How Great Leaders Succeed by Harnessing the Power of their Values, Feelings and Intuition*. He speaks nationally and internationally on leadership, on an event level and on a media level.

Nature of the Program

The unique aspect of the LCP is that it is a holistic approach to accelerating business and leadership performance, producing measurable and observable results. The program utilizes business leadership research and techniques as well as psychological principles to create positive outcomes. The premise of the LCP is that today's leaders should be leading not only from their competencies and skill sets, but also from who they are as people, including their character, their integrity and their values.

Current popular business and leadership books validate this perspective. Leadership research and case studies are now producing significant findings about how understanding and developing emotional intelligence, relational attunement, a core set of personal values, and character maturity can drive high leadership and organizational performance and outcomes. Below is a brief listing of some of the more important works:

Bass, B., Riggio, R. (2006). *Transformational Leadership*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Bennis, W. (2003). *On Becoming A Leader*, 2nd Edition. New York: Basic Books.

Cloud, H. (2006). *Integrity: The Courage To Meet the Demands of Reality*. New York: Collins.

De Pree, M. (2004). *Leadership Is An Art*. New York: Currency Books.

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., McKee, A. (2002). *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

- Kouzes and Posner, (2003). *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose it, Why People Demand It*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lencioni, P. (2002). *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- O'Toole, J. (1996). *Leading Change: The Argument for Values-Based Leadership*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Using this approach and incorporating these values, the LCP integrates the personal and professional lives of the leader to achieve lasting next-level results.

Aspects

The LCP has several aspects, which provide necessary training experiences for the attendee. On an overall level, applicants go through an interview process with Dr. Townsend, and submit a resume of professional, educational and training experience. After the interview process, the files are analyzed and a final cut is made of the best-fit ten applicants. Dr. Townsend invites those ten, and, if they accept the invitation, the team is formed. Backgrounds are from various industry sectors and experience bases: IT, finances, manufacturing, retail, real estate, physicians, attorneys, etc. The team meets one day a month, 8am-5pm, in a private hotel or country club setting. The commitment is on an annualized basis. During the day, the team is involved in the following aspects of development:

Goal Setting: Once the team is formed, each member crafts a statement about their goals and objectives for the coaching time: what skills they want to see develop, where they want to see themselves professionally and personally, what challenges they want to conquer. These big-picture goals are shared among the team, to provide a structure for the experience.

Lecture: Dr. Townsend will deliver a talk on some aspect of leadership and one's personal life, strengths and challenges. This is a time of information-dispensing, and team members take notes, ask questions and interact with the material. Here are some representative topics:

Character and Leadership

Relationships and Isolation in the Leader

How to Confront Well as a Leader

Dealing with Negative Realities Effectively

Understanding Creativity and Passion in the Leader

The Growth Process and the Leader

Problem-Solving Approaches

Skills for Dealing Adaptively to Difficult Times

Developing and Maintaining Healthy Structure as a Leader

Optimizing Strengths and Capacities

Process Group: Leaders tend to live in a somewhat isolated world, or one surrounded by others who are dependent on them for vision, clarity and support. Many leaders have no context in which they interact personally with other high-capacity individuals who understand their experiences, and who can help them navigate life and business. Process Group is a supportive, safe and confidential group setting in which the leaders are able to unpack themselves, their work and personal challenges, and get input, clarity and solutions from Dr. Townsend personally, as well as from the group. There are two Process Groups during the day, one in the morning, and one in the afternoon.

Work Group: This is a session in which each team member will present his or her business or organizational structure to the group. It is a technical part of the day. Members can present in the form of a PowerPoint, a handout, a flip chart, or any number of modalities. The member will go over targeted strengths, weaknesses, obstacles and threats. Once the presentation has been made, the team provides clarifying questions and recommendations for increased levels of organizational functioning and problem solving. This is a high value time, because of the varied experience bases and perspectives of the team members. There are two Work Groups during the day, one in the morning, and one in the afternoon.

Readings: Dr. Townsend will assign a reading each month that pertains to leadership issues, such as the books listed above. The team will discuss their responses to the material, and how the content affects their professions and performance.

Homework: This is a key aspect of the program. Business leaders are busy people, and there is a tendency to leave a setting, and let life and its demands take over. This reduces the effectiveness of any training experience. To counter this tendency, each team member will craft a homework assignment tailored to his or her situation. The accountability of the homework helps break up the inertia of the month, and provides actionables that continue the growth and development process.

Homework is determined in two ways: (1) by breaking down the big year's goal into incremental pieces, for example, "This month I will increase my sales or deals closed by X percent"; and (2) by taking stock of what they have learned about themselves during the day's experience. We use the term *themes* to describe this. A team member may want to create actionables to work on a theme they have discovered during the day. Below are some examples of themes and their corresponding homework assignments:

Isolation, or not letting others know who we are inside. This is a very common leadership problem. Every leader needs to be known somewhere on a more vulnerable level, or they risk loss of energy, clarity and focus. Being connected and

known is a critical part of high performance over the long haul. While the work environment may not be the appropriate place for this them to be addressed, the leader must find supportive people somewhere in life. The assignment might be to find two safe individuals in ones' life sector with whom they can open up, talk about what is really going on, and receive encouragement.

Conflict Avoidance, or a problem in being able to directly confront one's direct reports, superiors, or colleagues on problems of performance or attitude. This is also a common problem in business, in which the leader either does not want to discourage others or hurt their feelings, and so performance stays at a less-than-optimal level. The homework assignment might be to have two direct conversations that need to be done, during the month.

Best-Fit Issues. Often, leaders are not aware of their strengths and competencies to the extent that they know where they best fit in their positions and roles. They experience work as something good and meaningful, but don't know if they are truly maximizing their potential as a human being. The assignment here might be to both do some strengths assessment and to investigate the roles and positions in the company that could work better. Another assignment might be to look at the tendency to want to "do it all" and not be able to let go of some possibilities in order to drill down in others.

Risk Avoidance, in which the leader has perfectionistic tendencies that prohibit him or her from creativity, measured risks and challenges. The tendency to self-judge and have negative self-talk keeps the leader from "failing forward (John Maxwell's term) and learning valuable lessons. In today's business environment, the paradigms are changing so rapidly, that we need leaders who can deal with new setting and be comfortable with mistakes and negative realities. The homework assignment might be to take some risks, deal with the anxiety, and learn the benefits of risk.

Structure Problems, in which the team member is hampered by tendencies to be disorganized, have problems focusing, and can't maximize time and energy toward the appropriate goals. The assignment for this person might be to create a life calendar and schedule, or an organizational chart, to help build structure into him or her.

A Life Out of Balance, where the leader is driven by work demands and is spending so much time and energy with the career, without tending to family, friends and outside interests, that he or she is at risk of lower performance and lower effectiveness. The assignment here might be to calendar several times during the month in which he or she has some non-work-related enjoyable experience and gets life back in balance, at the same time dealing with the common guilt and anxiety about doing that.

Each team member determines his or her homework assignment with the help of Dr. Townsend and the other members. Then everyone is also assigned a homework partner for the month, which rotates. The requirement is for partners to call either other once a week for a minimum of 15 minutes, to check on each other and support the homework execution.

Personal Time with Dr. Townsend

Dr. Townsend will make phone times available each month for team member to consult individually about their development process, questions, and challenges on a professional and personal level. Members will schedule their phone sessions through his office. Each team member will have their agenda prepared ahead of time, in order to maximize the use of the consult. These times have high value both on an insight level and a recommendation level.

Social Network

The team will have its own private, password-protected social network system. In that forum, members can post questions, tips, learnings, encouragement, challenges and information. Dr. Townsend is also part of the network, and will provide content and feedback through it.

Conclusion

The holistic nature of the Leadership Coaching Program provides a unique and time-tested way to bring about significant performance results for the leader. For any questions or comments about the program, please contact any of the following:

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